

THE GREEN PARTIES IN BRITAIN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Abstract

Over the past decade, there have been remarkable support for the Green parties in Britain, as environmental issues have become more popular. Due to the geographical division of Britain, the Green parties of Scotland, the Green party of Ireland, and the Green parties of England and Wales will be examined. Four methodological approaches were utilized to compare the structures of these Green parties in Britain, namely: Origins and development, sociological composition, ideology and policy positions, and organizational structure. However, as independent as the British Greens are, does being in power change the focus of the Greens in Britain? Has it affected the Political Programme? The findings show it has an effect to an extent, but it has not changed the aggregate focus of the Green Parties. Due to their independence, we conclude that the Green parties in Britain have different political programs that are tailored to fit the party's agenda.

INTRODUCTION

For more than three decades, the Greens in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Scotland have participated in the political process by participating in the electoral process. The goal of a new party is to attain the threshold of representation in the government and ultimately, reach the threshold of relevance which will enable the parties to affect policies or in some cases, pose as challenger parties to the opposition. Throughout the history of the Green parties, there have been “highs and lows, but they have maintained a permanent presence in party politics.”¹ The various Green parties in the British Isles are independent of one another which makes them one of the special cases among the Greens in Europe. Pre-independent of the British Greens,

“Political coalitions appear to be a closed road for the Green party. The conservatives have certainly no time for environmentalism, and in the labor party, there was some sympathy for the idea of the Greens.”²

How did the Greens overcome this? The Green parties separated and formed the Green Party in Northern Ireland, Scottish Green Party, Green parties in Ireland and the Green parties of England and Wales³, but for my research, I will exclude the Green party of Northern Ireland because of its small size. This research provides a systematic and comparative account of the Scottish Greens, Greens of England and Wales, and the Greens in Ireland. This research is significant because, in comparison to the Greens in Europe, the British Greens were among the pioneers of the Green Parties in Europe and have exhibited persistency in the electoral process. For the comparative analysis of the British Greens, I will utilize Emile Van Haute’s method of party

¹ Lynn Bennie, *Green Parties in Europe: Greens in the United Kingdom and Ireland* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 196

² Mike, Robinson. *The greening of British Party Politics*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 214

³ Lynn Bennie, *Green Parties in Europe: Greens in the United Kingdom and Ireland* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 196

organization to assess the Greens in Britain because they operate independently and have different structures and core issues they represent. This helps us understand how these parties are structured independently on their own, regardless of their prior formation before these parties separated. As independent as the British Greens are, does being in power change the focus of the Greens in Britain? Has it affected their Political Programme? Emile Van Haute's method is comprised of four themes, namely: origins and development, sociological composition, ideology and policy positions, and organizational structure⁴. Each of these themes addresses how the British Greens have evolved looking at different aspects of their organization.

THE PARTY POLITICS IN BRITAIN: BREAKTHROUGH FOR MINOR PARTIES

Over the years, the party politics in Britain has undergone some shifts and assessing the shifts from the contemporary lens; dealignment is more evident in contemporary party politics. This has caused an uneven shift between the 'class' and the 'party'⁵ The class influence is on the decline and "other social divides have opened up to shape party politics. Political commitment has become realigned reflecting new or re-emergent social cleavages."⁶ There is more willingness from the voters to make decisions on which party they intend to support which could be based on personal factors or others, and has gradually shifted away from social relations. Contrary to prior views on British politics, there is increasing fragmentation of support away from the Labor and Conservatives and an increase in support for minor parties such as the Green

⁴ Ibid, 4-5

⁵ Driver, Stephen. *Understanding British Party Politics* (Polity Press, 2016), 26

⁶ Ibid, 30

Party. The system has encouraged competition by incorporating more parties, instead of the traditional two-party system.

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT:

The threshold of declaration for the UK Greens, which consisted of England and Wales (GPEW) was passed in 1973, formally stating their intention to become a political party and named it 'People'. The Irish Greens declared their intention to form in 1981 which came after the Greens of England and Wales. The initial name given to the party was the Ecology Party of Ireland. However, after a few years, "the Scottish Greens created a separate political organization in 1989."⁷ After the party formation for the UK Greens, the party participated in the national election twice the following year in which they accrued a share of 0.01 and 0.0 respectively in February and October 1974 which they failed to win a seat.⁸ After that, the party changed its name to 'Ecology Party' in 1975 and eventually settled to be called the 'Green party' in 1985. In the case of the Irish Greens, like the UK Greens, they also participated in the national elections the following year. The party changed its name to 'Green Alliance,' and it was the first Green party in the British Isles to win seats in the local council and national parliament. The Scottish Greens were part of the UK Greens before the split in the 1990s. The origin of the Scottish Greens and the UK Greens was the same, but the difference is between these two Greens is that

⁷ Sarah, Birch. Parliamentary Affairs: Prospects for Green Party Support in Britain 62 (Oxford 2018: Oxford University Press), 54

⁸ Lynn Bennie, Green Parties in Europe: Electoral results of UK Greens, general elections, (1974-2010, including Northern Ireland), 198

the Scottish Greens changed its name to ‘Green party’ a year after the UK Greens.⁹ Most of these parties started out as an interest group and to be able to participate in elections; they had to become a political party formally. The interest groups “deals with a limited range of issues and represent a narrow segment of a Country’s population. For example, environmental groups that lobby for specific issues, while political party brings the interests of a number of groups together to gain control over the government either as an independent unit or coalition”¹⁰ The transformation from an informal actor to formal actor shows a characteristic in which the Greens, in general, have operated. Although, in other parts of Europe, some movements opted to remain as it is, while others decided to formalize and become a party. Table 1 below shows the chronology of the developments of the UK Greens and Irish Greens.

TABLE 1:

GREENS OF ENGLAND/WALES		GREENS OF IRELAND	
Year	Important developments	Year	Important development
1973	Party formation, name of ‘people’	1981	Party formation, Ecology Party Of Ireland
1974	First participation in a national election	1982	First participation in a national Election.
1974	First national conference	1983	Change of name to Green Alliance

⁹ Edinburgh Greens, “A Short History of the Scottish Green Party.”
<https://www.edinburghgreens.org.uk/site/a-short-history-of-the-scottish-green-party/> (accessed April 19, 2019)

¹⁰ Hauss, Charles, “*Comparative Politics: Domestic Responses to Global Challenges*” (Wadsworth, Cengage Learning; 2011, 2009, 2006), 13

1975	Change of name from 'people' to Ecology Party	1985	First seats won in local councils
1979	First national television election	1987	Change of name to Green Party
1985	Change of name from Ecology to Green Party	1989	First seat in national parliament
1989	Party achieves 15% in European elections	2001	Leader of party created
1999	First UK Green parliamentarian elected, to Scottish Parliament	2002	most successful national election till date
2007	Leader of party created	2007	First member elected to Northern Ireland Assembly
2010	First seat in national parliament (House of Commons)	2007	Part of coalition government
		2011	(Fianna Fail & Progressive Dems
		2011	All six TD's lose in general Election

Source: Lynn, Bennie. "Chronology of the main developments of the UK and Irish Greens",

Table, (2016), 197

As expected, one would think that the ultimate goal of a party is to represent the interest of the party at the national stage, but this is not true for all parties as some of these parties are interested in posing as a challenger party to the opposition, while others have different motivating factors. There are various indicators of party growth, but party membership seems to be one of the common determinants. Looking at **Table 2**, there is a trend of increasing candidacy for an

election which means that the party is growing. For example, comparing the UK Greens candidacy trend from 1974 to 2011, there is a rise in the number of candidates. Likewise, the total votes received for the Green parties, there is a gradual rise year by year except for members of parliament elected (MPs) which had no impact.

TABLE 2:

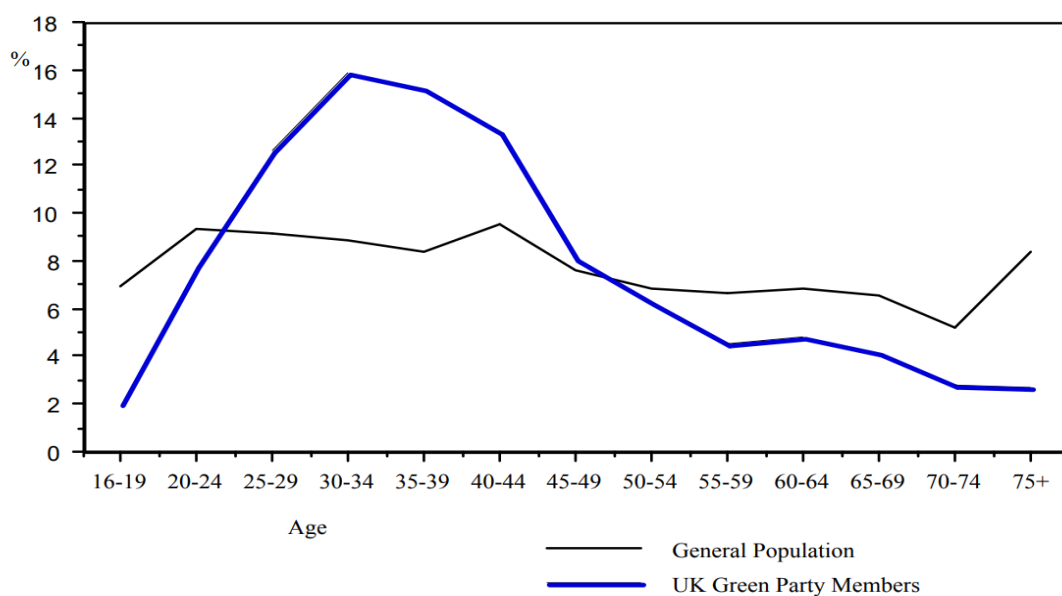
Election	Candidates	% Vote in seats contested	MPs elected
Feb 1974	5	1.8	0
Oct 1974	4	0.7	0
1979	53	1.5	0
1983	108	1.0	0
1987	133	1.3	0
1992	256	1.3	0
1997	95	1.4	0
2001	145	2.9	0
2005	203	3.4	0
2010	335	1.8	1

Lynn Bennie, Green Parties in Europe: Electoral results of UK Greens, general elections, (1974-2010, including Northern Ireland), 198

SOCIOLOGICAL COMPOSITION

The most salient issue for all green parties is the environment. However, according to Emilie Van Haute, she concluded in her book *Green parties in Europe* that “the ideal-typical Green voter is young, nonreligious, female, urban and educated. Besides, the Green vote can be seen an issue-based vote that transcends old politics.”¹¹ To corroborate this claim, in terms of age composition, it is reported that the Greens are younger than other population with 66.9% between age ranges of 16 and 44. In the case of the Scottish members, 75% of the Scottish Greens are aged 44 or less.¹²

TABLE 3:

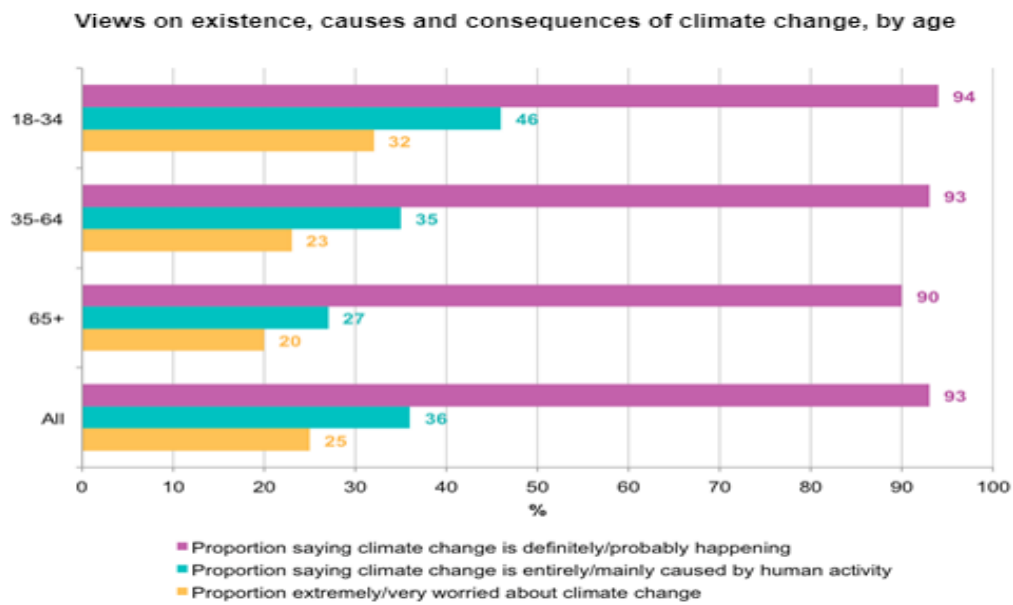


Source: Wolfgang Rudig, *Green Party Members: A Profile* (Glasgow: Delta Publishing, 1991),

¹¹ Emilie Van Haute, *Green Parties in Europe: Which family ties?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 319

¹² Wolfgang Rudig, *Green Party Members: A Profile* (Glasgow: Delta Publishing, 1991), 15

Above is the tabular representation of the age distribution of the Greens. In comparison with the general population, there are younger members on the party. Within the context of age, the younger population are more concerned about age, although, looking at TABLE 4 there is a consensus that climate change is happening, therefore, advocating for ways for damage control on the climate.



Source: Stephen Fisher, Social divisions in belief and behavior. London, United Kingdom, 2018, <http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-35/climate-change.aspx> (accessed April 16, 2019)

Among others, the Greens are also known to be non-religious. More than two thirds, 71% do not consider themselves part of any religious movement. The table below shows the breakdown of the religious affiliations of the UK Greens and the Scottish Greens. About 71.6% of UK Greens

do not belong to any religious group and 72.3% of Scottish Greens do not belong to any party¹³.

In terms of the female members, they make up 46% of the total members¹⁴.

	UK Green Party Members 1990 %	Scottish Green Party Members 1990 %	General Population 1989* %
(a) Do not belong to any religious group.....	71.6	72.3	34.4
(b) Roman Catholic Church.....	3.9	3.1	11.1
(c) Church of England.....	10.3	3.7	36.7
(d) Church of Scotland.....	0.1	8.8	4.5
(e) Methodist.....	1.7	1.0	4.0
(f) Quaker.....	5.2	4.7	0.1
(g) Other Christian.....	2.1	2.0	7.2
(h) Jewish.....	0.4	0.2	0.4
(i) Buddhist.....	1.8	2.4	0.1
(j) Other non-Christian.....	1.3	0.4	1.1
(k) Religious Movement.....	1.5	1.4	-

Source: Wolfgang Rudig, Green Party Members: *Religious Affiliation* (Glasgow: Delta Publishing, 1991), 27

IDEOLOGY AND POLICY POSITIONS

During the early stages of the Greens in Britain, they had no defined ideology and were flexible on policy issues. As the parties began to grow, they have developed comprehensive policy programmes which have given the party identity. The Greens of England and Wales have aligned

¹³ Wolfgang Rudig, Green Party Members: A Profile" (Glasgow: Delta Publishing, 1991), 27

See Note: The data for the Irish Greens could not be located, but we predict that the outcome for the non-religious members.

¹⁴ Audickas, Lukas et al. Membership of UK Political Parties". Commons briefing papers. 2015, 20

https://esrcpartymembersprojectorg.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/sn05125_hoc_membershipofukpoliticalparties.pdf. Accessed 19 April 2019.

Note: In the statistics for the parties in 2017, the Greens were active in almost all the aspect of party engagement. For example: 36% of members attended a meeting, 89% signed petition and 47% donated to party fund.

more with the left of center in Britain and more libertarian,¹⁵ while the Irish Greens seems to “appear less left-wing than their counterparts in the UK”¹⁶ The Irish Greens have been known to take a different approach than the other Greens in Britain. The Irish Greens have been flexible in their stance on issues to propel its electoral prospects.¹⁷ The Irish Party system has created a system where the Greens stood as a potential coalition partner and has compromised on some of their keys issues to accommodate the other parties.¹⁸ As expected, the British Green Parties advocate against the ecological damage, but they also take positions on other issues such as welfare, social justice, equality. In terms of the political programmes (manifestos), the Greens of England and Wales (GPEW) policy include “creating a just, equitable, and sustainable society. We focus our efforts primarily, though not exclusively, through the electoral system”¹⁹ Assessing the manifestos for the general election (2010) of the Green Party of England Wales, the first agenda in the manifesto was the economy in which they planned to address welfare and taxation, the second agenda was improving everyday life for the people, the citizens and the environment was another focal point for the Greens, the environment was also included in the manifesto and finally the international development (peace and security).²⁰ In 2015, the GPEW titled the manifesto ‘FOR THE COMMON GOOD’²¹. The policy the Greens embraced in 2015 includes Governing the common good, a decent livelihood, the earth, energy and climate, equalities, health and well-being, education, housing, creating commonwealth, tax reform, government and

¹⁵ Lynn Bennie, Green Parties in Europe: “*Greens in the United Kingdom and Ireland*” (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 203-204

¹⁶ Ibid, 204

¹⁷ Ibid, 205

¹⁸ Ibid, 205

¹⁹ <https://policy.greenparty.org.uk/>

²⁰ <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/policies-2010/2010manifesto-contents.html>

²¹ Judy Maciejowska, <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wmatrix/ukmanifestos2015/localpdf/Green.pdf>

people, transport, international affairs, and justice reform.²² The latest manifesto by the Greens of England and Wales was published in 2017 where their programmes include: a green economy for all, protecting the environment, membership of the EU, public services, education for all, promise to young people, a place to call home, a safer world, a citizens' democracy and a people's transport system.²³ The GPEW reasonably maintained the same policy positions over the three manifesto cycles. However, the Scottish Greens, which is also an independent party holds a different manifesto. In 2007, the agenda for the Scottish greens include: an economy for people and planet, healthy community, energy and climate change, transport, healthy and productive natural environment, and international development.²⁴ In the following election cycle in 2011, the Scottish manifesto included the following: a green alternative to public service cuts, local roots for local economy, sustainable economy, sustainable energy, public transport, and care for natural asset, education funding, support diverse communities, healthy society, and promoting justice.²⁵ The latest release of the party manifesto in 2016 highlighted the following in their manifestos: economy, care, housing, land reform, education, energy, health, environment, green tax, justice, democracy, transport, culture and sport and international development.²⁶ In the case for the Irish greens, in 2007, the agendas in their political program include energy, transport, housing, child care, health, education, tax, social welfare, crime, road safety, environmental protection, and waste.²⁷ A different edition of party manifesto in 2011 comprised

²² Ibid 2-5

²³ <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/gp2017/greenguarantee.pdf>

Note: I will be evaluating the past manifestos of each of the Green Parties. The manifestos will range from the latest to the other two cycles based on the general election date and year.

Based on the Scottish programmes, they lean on the left side.

²⁴ <https://greens.scot/sites/default/files/Manifestos/2007-Holyrood-Manifesto.pdf>

²⁵ <https://greens.scot/sites/default/files/Manifestos/2011-Holyrood-Manifesto.pdf>

²⁶ https://greens.scot/sites/default/files/Manifestos/Scottish%20Greens%20Manifesto_Online.pdf

²⁷ https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/uploads/attach/file/1160/53110_2007.pdf

of the following in their manifesto: sustainable resources, better leadership, better Ireland (childcare, homelessness, and social welfare), green vision for Ireland (climate change, water)²⁸. The most recent political program for the Irish Greens in 2016 are as follows: a new national plan, efficiency in social care, just society and culture and community.²⁹ There are variations in the importance of issues among the British greens. The Greens of England and Wales lean more to the left on social and economic issues. They also promote religious freedom and equal rights for everybody including the LGBTQ community. On the other hand, the Irish Greens maintained their progressive stance, but a compromise was ordered to remain relevant. The Scottish greens programmes reflect that the party is flexible with its ideology, but still maintaining their core principles and they serve as alternatives.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

Leadership:

Like other parties, the British Greens encountered problems new parties often face. The structural organization of the Greens of England and Wales and the Irish Greens were more decentralized and it was based participation. However, with increasing pressure to fit in the traditional party type, the British Greens have become more professionalized and centralized to meet the requirement of electoral politics.³⁰ Although, within the internal structure, the Green party “emphasizes most strongly the importance of local, decentralized decision making.”³¹ As

²⁸ <http://michaelpidgeon.com/manifestos/docs/green/Green%20Party%20GE%202011.pdf>

²⁹ https://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/people/michael_gallagher/Manifestos2016/GreenManifesto16.pdf

³⁰ Lynn Bennie, *Green Parties in Europe: “Greens in the United Kingdom and Ireland”* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 206

³¹ Wolfgang Rudig, *Green Party Members: A Profile* (Glasgow: Delta Publishing, 1991), 44

part of the organizational process, the national executive was created to exist along with the regional council which turns out to be a party chair and two principal speakers. Furthermore, the party embraced the professionalization of the party structure and also adopted a leadership structure consisting of a leader and co-leader. TABLE 4 below shows the party leaders from 2001 to 2014 for the Greens of England Wales and the Irish Green Party.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Votes cast/ turnout (%)</i>	<i>1st pref votes (%)</i>	<i>Time in office</i>	<i>Reason for resigning</i>
<i>Green Party of England and Wales</i>						
2008– 2012	Caroline Lucas	Full Member Postal Vote	2,769/37.9	92.4	4 years	End of term and became MP
2012– present	Natalie Bennett	Full Member Postal Vote	3,111/25.1	42.2	2 Years	In post
<i>Irish Green Party</i>						
2001– 2007	Trevor Sargent	Special convention	–	–	6 years	Due to party's decision to enter coalition
2007– 2011	John Gormley	Full Member Postal Vote	478/35.0	65.0	5 years	Following poor election of 2011
2011– present	Eamon Ryan	Full Member Postal Vote	550/71.6	40.5	3 years	In post

Lynn Bennie, Party leaders (2001-2014), Green Party of England and Wales (GPEW) and Irish Green Party, Accessed 2017

There have been some changes to the party leaders over the years. In the Green Party of England and Wales, Natalie Bennett held the leadership role in 2016. Thereafter, Caroline Lucas took over for two years with Jonathan Bartley as its co-leader. Unfortunately, Caroline Lucas stepped

down and the current leaders of the Green party are Jonathan Bartley and Sian Berry.³² There have been no changes to the leadership as seen on the table. Eamon Ryan has been the leader of the Irish greens since 2011. For the Scottish Greens, the party is currently co-convened by Patrick Harvie (MSP), who is a current member of Scottish parliament and Maggie Chapman³³.

MEMBERS AND MEMBERSHIP

Why do parties need members? Members are “viewed as an important resource for parties, and, party membership is seen as a way of enhancing participation and democracy.”³⁴ There are different roles of members and they include financing support, electoral support and maintaining party infrastructure.³⁵ However, recruiting and keeping members is vital to the Green Parties in Britain. The Green party of England and Wales and the Greens of Ireland “are characterized by instability and fluctuation.”³⁶ **Table 6** below shows the party membership from 1990 to 2013. This table shows the fluctuating patterns of party membership of the Green parties of England

³² Benjamin Kentish, “Green Party announces new co-leaders after Caroline Lucas steps down” Independent Newspaper. September 4, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/green-party-leaders-new-jonathan-bartley-caroline-lucas-sian-berry-a8522316.html>

Note: The Green Party of England and Wales elect their leaders every two years, while the greens of Ireland usually conduct the leadership election during the national elections. In the case for the Scottish Greens, I noticed that there is not a fixed pattern for electing their leaders. It ranges from two to three years and even one year. I believe this is due to resignation level.

³³ <https://greens.scot/homepage/the-people-behind-the-party> (Accessed 21 April, 2019)

³⁴ Lynn Bennie. “Party membership Matters” Lancaster University 13-15 September, 2013

³⁵ Ibid, 5

³⁶ Lynn Bennie, Green Parties in Europe: “*Greens in the United Kingdom and Ireland*” (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 21

Note: membership pattern reflects the different period of electoral success. In the case of the Green party of England and Wales, the fluctuation in membership starting from 1990 to 1995 shows a huge fluctuation. There were some missing data for the Scottish Greens, but the membership seems smaller than that of the GPEW. The Greens of Ireland averaged the same membership over the first four years and it started fluctuating like the rest of the Green Party.

Also note: There was no statistics for the Greens in Northern Ireland pertaining their latest membership figures.

and Wales, Scottish Greens, and the greens in Ireland. The omitted data for the latest years is as follows: Green party of England and Wales: In 2015, membership rose to 61,000 and for the Scottish Greens, it rose up to 9,000.³⁷ In 2017, there was a total of 42,410 members and in 2018, the GPEW membership dropped to 39,350³⁸

TABLE 6:

<i>Year</i>	<i>England & Wales</i>	<i>Scotland</i>	<i>Ireland</i>
1990	14,900	1,250	1,200
1991	18,500	—	1,200
1992	10,000	—	1,200
1993	6,500	300	1,200
1994	5,000	—	1,200
1995	—	300	1,000
1996	—	—	1,000
1997	—	300	1,000
1998	5,000	—	700
1999	—	400	—
2000	—	—	—

³⁷ Lynn Bennie et al. Party membership in the SNP and Scottish Greens' Review (Brighton 21-23, 2016)

³⁸ Audickas, Lukas et al. "Membership of UK Political Parties", September 3, 2018, <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN05125>

2001	—	400	—
2002	6,000	500	—
2003	5,000	700	—
2004	6,000	—	—
2005	7,000	—	900
2006	7,000	—	1,200
2007	7,000	—	2,100
2008	8,000	1,000	1,900
2009	10,000	1,100	—
2010	13,000	1,200	—
2011	15,000	1,300	800
2012	13,000	1,300	—
2013	14,000	1,200	—

Note: Figures are rounded.

Bennie, Lynn, Green Parties in Europe: “*Greens in the United Kingdom and Ireland*” (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 210

Electoral Result

The Green Parties in the British Isles have enjoyed major success in Scotland. “They won six seats in the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood, and while that number has dwindled, the party has been transformed following its support for a ‘yes’ vote in this year’s (2014) referendum”³⁹ The Scottish referendum has marked an important period in the political history The Scottish Greens and the Scottish National party established an agreement to work in the parliament. This was made possible due to the pro-independence support of both parties. The membership of the Greens and the Scottish National Party increased dramatically shortly after the referendum.

³⁹ Peter Geoghegan, “Britain’s Green Party Surge” Al Jazeera, December 2014, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/12/britain-green-party-surge-20141226135819536479.html>



SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY & SCOTTISH GREEN PARTY COOPERATION AGREEMENT

1. The Scottish National Party and the Scottish Green Party have reached agreement on how a new Government in Scotland will be established that pursues a progressive programme and which places addressing climate change at the heart of its agenda.

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/11_05_07_agreement.pdf

It is important to understand the electoral system operated in the United Kingdom, Scotland, and Ireland because this determines how votes are shared and calculated. In the case of the United Kingdom, they run the first past the post system which favors the candidates with the most vote. In Scotland, they run the mixed proportional system which candidates get two votes. Ireland employs a proportional representation by single transferrable vote which encourages inter and intraparty competition.⁴⁰ To breakdown the recent electoral results, we look at the most recent ones. In 2011, the Scottish Greens won two seats in the parliament, and in 2016, they won a total of 6 seats in the Scottish parliament. For the Greens in Ireland, they won 6 seats in 2007, 0 seats in 2011 and 2 seats in 2016.⁴¹ The Greens of England and Wales have consistently won 1 seat in each of the electoral cycles in 2010, 2015, and 2017 respectively.

CONCLUSION

To re-state the research question: does being in power change the focus of the Greens in Britain? Has it brought about a change in their political program? Yes, to an extent, but it has not changed the aggregate focus of the Green Parties. After analyzing the three Green Parties in the British

⁴⁰ https://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/people/michael_gallagher/IrishElectSys.php

⁴¹ [Ibid.](#)

Isle, it is logical to conclude that these parties have different political programs due to their independence and these programs are tailored to fit the needs of the party's agenda. However, gaining electoral seats at the national level has not yielded a great number, yet, they are persistent in their quest for electoral success. Some of the Green Parties in the British Isles, like the Greens of Ireland have formed coalition, which have led to compromise some of their stance on key issues. In the case of the Scottish Greens, they have appeared to maintain their stance, even though they formed a pack with the Scottish National Party (SNL) at the parliament on certain issues, which did not interfere with their principles. The Greens of England and Wales is the only Green Party in the British Isle that have maintained their position, without forming coalition with other parties. However, forming a coalition or a form of alliance has yielded some result for the British Greens. For example, in the latest Irish election, the Greens won two seats in the Parliament, while in the case of the Scottish Greens, they won six seats and the Green Party of England and Wales had one seat in the latest general election. Does this mean the Greens will continue to form coalition in Britain? As peculiar to the Green Parties in Europe, coalition is not a new phenomenon and as with the British Greens, it seems they will continue to form coalition, especially where they have favorable electoral system of voting (Scotland and Ireland) with proportional representation. The electoral prospect for the Greens in Scotland and Ireland seems more realizable than the Greens of England and Wales because of the first past the post electoral system. This is not to conclude that the GPEW cannot win more seats in the general election, but the probability is low.

The bright side on the path of the Green Parties is the global acceptance of the 'Green Culture'. Some political parties have modeled some 'Green' principles and have used it to push their agenda. Another positive is the increasing rise of voters who vote for the Green Parties. This has

been on the increase over the years. This is an indicator that the Greens in the British Isles are gradually gaining attention. In the future, there is a great prospect for the Greens in the British Isle to gain more positive electoral result at the national level. With the progress that has been made over three decades, the time for the Greens of Britain to dominate is near.

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